

**WETHERSFIELD TOURISM COMMISSION**  
**Meeting: Tuesday, October 28, 2008 at 5:30 p.m.**  
**Town Manager's Conference Room**  
**MINUTES**

**DRAFT FROM RECORDING SECRETARY**

**Review and/or edit needed where highlighted in yellow**

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 5:34 p.m. by Vice-Chair Chris Traczyk.

**Roll Call/Attendance** (5 required for quorum): Members in attendance: Chris Traczyk, Vice-Chair; Shireen Aforismo, Jenna Delay, Charles Ford, Carol Hall, Dorcas McHugh, Geraldine Munroe, Elaine St. Onge, and Katie Sullivan. Also in attendance: Peter Gillespie, Town Planner/Economic Development Manager.

Members absent: Charlie Forsdick.

**Public Comments:** None

**Approval of Minutes:** September 30, 2008 meeting - Chris Traczyk asked if there were corrections needed for the draft minutes, and none were requested. Carol Hall made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as drafted, Geraldine Munroe seconded the motion and the vote showed all members in favor.

**Announcements/ Introductions:**

**Reports:**

- Central CT Culture & Tourism Commission – Geraldine Munroe reported that there was discussion that convention business is down.
- Economic Development and Improvement Commission – Dorcas McHugh reported that the business visitation program has been received very well. Peter Gillespie said that approximately 20 packets were distributed through the program.
- GHC&VB, Potential Events - Carol Hall reported that a GHCVB wine tasting event is being held at the Silas Robbins House on November 5<sup>th</sup>. She also said that all members are encouraged to attend the GHCVB December 11<sup>th</sup> Holiday Party
- Grant Funding
  - *Preserve America* – Status: See Wayfinding and Gateway signage
  - Marketing Grant – Status: See Wayfinding and Gateway signage

- Wayfinding & Gateway signage – Peter Gillespie said that the Town Council approved receipt of the signage grant. He said that there will be meetings of the stakeholders group and the committees for Wayfinding, Marketing and Preserve America to decide how to implement the grants (i.e., e.g. who will be responsible for which tasks)
- 375<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee – Chris Traczyk distributed a 375<sup>th</sup> events calendar that she made by modifying a flyer distributed at the Cornfest. She said she offered the 375<sup>th</sup> Committee a webpage on the Tourism website. The 375<sup>th</sup> Committee picked a logo, which will be sent to Peter Gillespie for posting on the website. Ms. Traczyk said that the Town had budgeted \$25,000 for the 375<sup>th</sup> Committee, but the Town Manager has frozen \$15,000 of the total. That leaves \$10,000 for the 375<sup>th</sup> Parade, which is enough to continue parade planning. The next 375<sup>th</sup> Committee meeting is November 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Budget Status, 2008 – 09: Peter Gillespie reported that 5 line items were frozen that affect the Tourism Commission. Most notable were the \$3,750 for brochure printing and \$15,000 for support services, which includes advertising. This leaves the Commission enough funds for one ad this year, so the Commission will have to decide which ad is most important. Peter Gillespie reviewed some visitors statistics, including how the visitors heard about Wethersfield: 27% heard about it from friends or family, 14% from AAA Journeys magazine, 13% from a brochure, and 4% said from a hotel guest guide. The members discussed which ad would be best. Katie Sullivan said that the most common referral source for visitors to the Webb Deane Stevens Museum is consistently AAA. Elaine St. Onge said that she prefers AAA, but it is more expensive. Charlie Ford said that AAA pulls in visitors from nearby, and the poor economy suggests that travel will be done closer to home. The consensus of the discussion was to place the ad in AAA Journeys Magazine. The members also said that the ad should be revised to incorporate the 375<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. Chris Traczyk said that the 375<sup>th</sup> Committee would be thrilled with anything that Tourism did to co-promote the 375<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.
- Event Calendar – Update: Jenna Delay said that she is up to date with posting November events, but badly needs information about events in December, January and February. Charlie Ford said that the Old Wethersfield Shopkeepers are holding an open house in November, and he would get some information about it to Ms. Delay. Ms. Delay said she continues to build the listserve and even has members of playgroups in Town on the list.
- Quarterly Report – Peter Gillespie said that he is working with Charlie Forsdick on reporting, which they have agreed to hold off until there is enough information compiled to make reporting worthwhile. He said that reports will probably be quarterly and they are trying to prepare one for submission at the next Town Council meeting. Mr. Gillespie said that some of the highlights include: visitors were from many different places – 23 states, 24 Connecticut towns, and 5 countries. On a percentage basis, 35% were from Connecticut, 40% were from New England states, 60% visited for the first time, 60% said they would come again, 50% were not staying overnight, 53% were spending less than \$100, 0% said it was the worst place they had ever visited, 37% said it was better than most, and 33% said Wethersfield was among the best places they had visited.

### **Old Business:**

- Seasonal Event Schedule - Door Decorating Contest: Dorcas McHugh said that she contacted a couple of garden clubs about doing this, and both said there was not enough time to do one this year. Ms. McHugh suggested that the Commission put in a tickler file to contact garden clubs around June – August about events in December. Katie Sullivan said that she would put a tickler in a Google calendar she uses.
- Farmers Market – New event: Jenna Delay said that there had been no recent meetings about which to report, but another would be scheduled soon.
- Visitor Survey – Quarterly report; Peter Gillespie: This item was previously discussed under the Budget and Quarterly Reports items in the Reports section of the agenda.
- Stakeholder Meeting: Peter Gillespie said that a meeting would be scheduled soon.
- Stakeholder List Expansion: Peter Gillespie said that they are still looking for representatives from businesses on the Silas Deane Highway and Berlin Turnpike. He suggested that the Chamber of Commerce asked for ideas. Geraldine Munroe said that merchants in these corridors may not be as interested because an important part of tourism is accommodating groups. She said that groups need a place where they can get off of their bus and walk around to multiple places. She said that the layout of the Silas Deane Highway and Berlin Turnpike is not conducive for groups to walk around.
- Tourism DVD – Footage and still collection: Chris Traczyk/Geraldine Munroe: Chris Traczyk reported that the Paul Mayer was in town a couple of weeks ago to videotape tourists and some staged situations. Mr. Mayer wants to be able to show the Town in more than one season, so he plans to do more video in the spring. He plans to have the DVD finished in June. Katie Sullivan said that a wedding was held recently at the Webb Barn which was done in a colonial style with many dressed in colonial clothing. She said that she would see if there was video available from the wedding that could be used in the DVD. Charlie Ford said that the Old Wethersfield Shopkeepers developed a video ad a few years ago that had a George Washington theme. He said he would try to get information on the video.

### **New Business:**

- Events – Cemetery Lantern Tour: Katie Sullivan said that Webb Deane Stevens Museum has agreed to produce the event for the Fall of 2009. She said that she obtained from Anne Kuckro a copy of the script used in previous lantern tours.
- December Meeting – December 30, Silas Robbins House: Shireen Aforismo agreed to hold the December meeting at the Silas Robbins House. The members agreed that the meeting

would be partly a social event for the Commission. Final plans for things such as serving food and wine would be discussed at the next Commission meeting.

- Talking Map: Peter Gillespie said that there has been a lot of interest in this web-based service, but the vendor has not yet provided the additional information requested.
- Journeys Website Banner: This item was tabled for the November meeting.
- 2009 Meeting Schedule: The members agreed that the meeting schedule would remain monthly, on the last Tuesday of the month, at 5:30 PM.

**Follow Up Items:** Chris Traczyk ran through the list of items. She said that the only items not discussed earlier in the meeting were the use of the trolley bus by groups, and the upcoming schedule for horse and buggy rides.

**Trolley Bus Use by Groups:** Peter Gillespie said that groups can get a discount rate for using the bus, provided the bus is reserved through an organization in Town, and prior approval of the organization and the reservation is received from Peter Gillespie on behalf of the Town. Katie Sullivan asked whether the discount would apply to the situation of the trolley bus being reserved for tours by attendees of a wedding held at the Webb Barn. Peter Gillespie said he would double check, but believed that would be OK. He said he would get information out to the members about the trolley bus availability and terms.

**Holiday Horse and Buggy Rides:** Peter Gillespie said that an accounting of the remaining funds would be done prior to a meeting with the stakeholders to decide which dates to run the ride. Charlie Ford said that he felt the rides would be a bigger draw if the dates were set farther in advance so more advertising of the rides could be done. He said that he thinks the riders have mostly been people that were already in Wethersfield, and that more people would come to Wethersfield if they knew about the rides in advance.

**Correspondence:** None.

**Next Meeting Date:** November 25, 2008 at 5:30 PM, Town Manager's Conference Room.

**Call to Adjourn:** Katie Sullivan motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:35 p.m., Shireen Aforismo seconded the motion, and the vote showed all members in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin T. Sullivan  
Commission Recording Secretary